

MONTANA UNTOLD

STORY LEADS

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Friendly Neighbors on Lone Peak

**Big Sky Resort and
Moonlight Basin
Interconnect to
Create One of North
America's Largest
Ski Areas**

When does one plus one equal 11,166? When you add Big Sky, the famed Montana ski resort envisioned in the 60's by TV news legend Chet Huntley, and Moonlight Basin, one of the first new destination ski areas to open in the U.S. in the past 20 years. Combining the enormous terrain of these two adjacent ski areas opens all of the possibilities of Montana's monolithic "Matterhorn" — 11,166 foot Lone Peak.

The two ski resorts recently announced they are pooling resources to form one of North America's largest interconnected trail networks. Sharing the same mountain—Lone Peak—the two trail networks, when combined, offer nearly 5,300 acres (2,145 hectares) of skiable terrain and the second largest vertical descent in the U.S. at 4,350 feet (1,326 meters). With 23 lifts spread across two resorts, the sheer magnitude of the areas, coupled with state-of-the-art lift systems, ensures virtually non-existent lift lines.



Lone Peak

Previously, it was necessary to purchase a lift ticket or season pass from each of the areas if you wanted to explore them both. This year, skiers and snowboarders have the option to purchase tickets and passes allowing unlimited access to both resorts.

Burt Mills, CEO at Moonlight Basin, called the new alliance "a milestone in American skiing. What we're doing here is closer to the European model, where adjacent resorts interconnect with a lift ticket that permits skiers to access everything." Taylor Middleton, general manager of Big Sky Resort, added, "Big Sky and Moonlight will offer what may well prove to be the largest amount of skiable terrain

in the nation. Given our famously low skier density, the expanded trail network will provide even more elbow room for our guests."

For more information about Big Sky Resort, contact Dax Schieffer, Public Relations Manager at 406-995-5895 or dschieffer@bigskyresort.com or go to www.bigskyresort.com. For more information about Moonlight Basin, contact Rich Hohne, Assistant General Manager at 406.993.6000 or e-mail: rhohne@moonlightbasin.com.

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Missouri River Country's Got What You're Hunting For

From trophy mule and whitetailed deer to abundant pheasants and waterfowl, northeast Montana is a hunter's Mecca.

And thanks to Fish, Wildlife & Parks' popular Block Management Program, access to wildlife on more than 1.2 million acres of private land in this corner of the state is as easy as signing your name. Many of the private properties enrolled in Block Management require hunters to register at remote sign-in boxes. These "Type I" properties allow hunters to hunt a Block Management area that looks productive without chasing down the landowner first.

Some 280 landowners are enrolled in Block Management in FWP's Region 6, a huge rectangle that extends from west of Havre to the North Dakota line, and Canada south to the Missouri River.

Expect to find good whitetail and pheasant hunting on the Missouri and Milk river



Rodney Schlecht

Whitetail buck

bottoms and most stream valleys. Mule deer, along with sharp-tailed and sage grouse, are abundant in most of the region's upland habitat. Elk roam the timbered breaks of the

Missouri River, and antelope are found on the shortgrass prairies mainly south of U.S. Highway 2.

The extreme northeastern corner of the state is graced with abundant shallow ponds, called prairie potholes, that produce thousands of ducks and geese, and attract south-bound migrants through mid November. Better late-season waterfowl spots are the larger reservoirs and Missouri River below Fort Peck Dam.

Big-game hunters who are especially lucky in the June drawings for special permits can participate in one of the most coveted hunts in the West: chasing bighorn sheep in the same Missouri River Breaks where Lewis and Clark first saw the animals 200 years ago.

Contact Andrew McKean, FWP information officer, at amckean@mt.gov with questions specific to hunting or fishing in the northeast region of Montana. For general hunting information, log onto www.fwp.state.mt.us.

by Andrew McKean

America's Newest National Park: Established October 5, 1877

Montana is home to the first national park (Yellowstone), the first international peace park (Glacier, together with Waterton in Canada), and now, the newest national park, Bear Paw Battlefield, one of 38 sites along the Nez Perce National Historical Park. The battlefield was declared a national park on May 24, 2005.

The site is one of the most famous western battlefields of all, as the place where Chief Joseph surrendered following a long flight from his homelands in Idaho. After leading nearly 800 Nez Perce toward the Canadian border all summer long (along the way, outmaneuvering the pursuing U.S. Army in several engagements), Chief Joseph laid down his weapons and delivered a speech ending with the well-known words: "From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more forever." The battlefield, which is a unit of the Nez Perce National Historical Park, preserves the site of the last battle of the Nez Perce War and is managed by the superintendent of Big Hole National Battlefield.



photo courtesy Montana Historical Society

Chief Joseph

On May 24th, the day the site was officially declared a national park, the National Park Service (NPS) presented the state of Montana and The Conservation Fund with plaques to show its appreciation for their assistance in the land exchange that transferred ownership of the site from the state to the NPS. An annual commemoration of the battle is scheduled for October 8.

Nez Perce National Historical Park joins seven other units of the national park system with a presence in Montana: Yellowstone and Glacier national parks, Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area, Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument (site of Custer's Last Stand) in Crow Agency, Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site in Deer Lodge, and Big Hole National Battlefield in Wisdom.

Bear Paw Battlefield is in Montana's Russell Country, sixteen miles south of Chinook on County Highway 240. To find out more, go to www.nps.gov/nepe/. Log onto www.russell.visitmt.com to find lodging and other area information.



Bear Paw Battlefield

Miles City: Center of the Cowboy Universe



Miles City Bucking Horse Sale parade

Many towns lay claim to Western history and lore, stretching from Tombstone to Deadwood. But perhaps no town on earth still offers an authentic slice of cowboy culture the way Miles City, Montana does.

The town, of course, has the kind of rough-and-tumble beginnings and history one would expect from any self-respecting Western town. Following the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876, the U.S. Army sent troops to temporary quarters at the confluence of the Tongue and Yellowstone Rivers. Their primary purpose was to protect settlers and traders in the area, but their influx also had an indirect result: a few miles away, a small town was established to provide rest and relaxation for the soldiers—most notably, in the form of whiskey.

Within a year, the town had 200 residents and a permanent name of Miles City (ironically named for Colonel Nelson A. Miles, a temperance man who never approved of his name being given to a “whiskey town”). In the years that followed a gallery of rogues and famous faces would find their way to Miles City, including Calamity Jane, Butch Cassidy, Morgan Earp, and Teddy Roosevelt.

Today, Miles City retains that frontier character, even with the 21st-century influences. For instance, the Montana Bar downtown still has the stamped tin roof and the longhorn steer heads that first made their appearance in the early 20th century, making it a true “cowboy watering hole.”

The Wool House Gallery is a literal part of the town’s cowboy history. This unique museum and art gallery is housed in a 1909 Wool House built for the Milwaukee Railroad.

The Custer County Art & Heritage Center is perhaps an even more interesting venue: it’s housed inside the holding tanks for the city’s original water treatment plant, built in 1910.

The Range Riders Museum, meanwhile, sits on the exact spot where Colonel Miles constructed the original cantonment to house soldiers. In 1939, a group of cowboy-stockmen, deciding the area’s rich cowboy history needed to be preserved, founded the museum for that very reason. The museum’s collection has grown to nine buildings, and thousands of artifacts, including frontier weapons.

But perhaps the event that keeps Miles City most closely connected to its Wild West origins is the world-famous bucking horse sale each spring. The bucking horses are real—as are the cowboys who ride them—and rodeo contractors put in their bids for horses as soon as the cowboys fly off the horses’ backs.

All of which might explain why Miles City is still called “Cow Capital of Montana.” Indeed, it just may be the cow capital of the world.

Miles City is located in Montana’s Custer Country. To find lodging and other area information, go to www.custer.visitmt.com.

Ground Broken for Lodge at Whitefish Lake

The town of Whitefish is about to get its first full-service resort built in the last 20 years.

The Lodge at Whitefish Lake will contain the equivalent of 100 hotel rooms (comprised of new hotel suites and the current inventory of 30 lakefront condominiums). Additional amenities will include an expanded marina, a restaurant and lounge overlooking the lake, and more than 8,000 square feet of meeting space. Construction of the new property is scheduled for completion in November 2005.

Designed by CTA Group, the construction of the chalet-style lodge will feature wood, stone and native Montana materials to bring the colors and textures of the Treasure State inside. The suites will open onto private decks with lake or mountain views and feature kitchenettes with granite counter tops, oversized comfortable furnishings, slate floors, stone fireplaces and baths with tubs and walk-in showers. High-speed Internet access will be available throughout the hotel.

The resort will be able to host meetings for groups as large as 400. The 6,366 square foot Conference Room, divisible by three, adjoins a 1,474 square foot pre-function area. Groups can also choose a lakeside function area, Executive Board Room or two private dining rooms.

The Lodge at Whitefish Lake will offer a private beach with a year-round outdoor swimming pool and marina for boat and personal watercraft rentals. It will also feature a full-service Day Spa, shops and boutiques and underground parking.



A rendering of the Lodge at Whitefish Lake

The Lodge at Whitefish Lake is located in Montana’s Glacier Country. For more information, call the marketing and sales office at 406-862-8986, or go to www.lodgeatwhitefishlake.com. To find other area information, go to www.glacier.visitmt.com.

Beware of Things That Go Bump in the Night

At the annual October Ghost Walk, long-told stories of spirits shroud the ghost town of Bannack, Montana.

Vigilantes bestowed violent beginnings, but dig deeper. The town's windswept cemetery where its spirits rest, or don't rest, is an indelible record of the lives and tragedies that will forever color the history of Bannack.

Perry Meade, for example (whose parents ran the Meade Hotel), went to work at the Eugene Mine on August 18, 1895, promising his wife that this would be his last shift underground. It was. Mud filled the south drift, suffocating him. Then a year later, another tragedy—Meade's little son died during a measles epidemic.

Or consider Katherine Moore who, in May of 1916, took an ax, and as her miner husband slept, bludgeoned him to death claiming abuse and mental illness. The judge later acquitted her.

And then there was sixteen-year-old Dorothy Dunn. In August of 1916, she, her cousin Fern and Ruth Wornick waded into a dredge pond and stepped off a shelf into deep water. None could swim. Twelve-year-old Smith Paddock saved Ruth and Fern, but lovely, vivacious Dorothy drowned.

Spirits are everywhere at Bannack, especially at the Meade Hotel. Built circa 1875 as the Beaverhead County Courthouse, it was, and is, the town's centerpiece. In 1877, barricaded and fortified, panicked



Meade Hotel at Bannack State Park

settlers took a week's refuge there amidst unfounded rumors of a Nez Perce attack. In 1881, the county seat moved to Dillon, where the building sat abandoned until 1888 when Dr. John S. Meade remodeled it as the Meade Hotel. But after losing their son and grandson, the Meades moved to California leaving their hotel to others.

Rufe Mathews and his wife, Montana, later managed the hotel where their daughter, Bertie, spent much of her childhood. Bertie took it hard when her best friend Dorothy Dunn drowned. Just several months later, Bertie's sister, Hazel Jagers, and her brother-in-law, Roy, died of influenza. The Mathews family took in the Jagers' two little children. It was a terrible time. Lee Graves, Bertie's godson, says that some time later Bertie was upstairs in the hotel where she saw the apparition of her

friend. Bertie recognized Dorothy's long blue dress. The experience scared her, and she seldom talked about it.

Others, too, have seen Dorothy upstairs in the hotel. Visitors reported unusually cold spots and sometimes find breathing difficult, as if they were underground or underwater, and unable to breathe.

It takes little imagination to sense spirits at Bannack. They drift cold through the empty buildings, peek around the corners in the old hotel and cry into the wind like children wanting attention. Pick a quiet afternoon, and see for yourself.

If you enjoy ghost stories, don't miss the annual Bannack Ghost Walk October 28 and 29, by reservation only (406-834-2413). Bannack is open year-round with the exception of December 24-25.

The park is located in Montana's Gold West Country, approximately 24 miles southwest of Dillon. For more information, visit www.bannack.org. For area information, log onto www.goldwest.visitmt.com.

by Ellen Baumler and Tom Lowe



Hallway inside the Meade

FROM MONTANA

The diversity of events, places and people in Montana is almost as wide as the state itself. We hope to give you a taste of that diversity with this quarterly newsletter. In addition, the following services are offered to editors, writers and producers:

Visual Materials

Color slides, digital images and stock video footage are available for editorial use.

Writer/Photographer Referrals

We can put you in contact with many of Montana's most talented and experienced freelance writers and photographers.

Editorial Copy/Calendar of Events

We can provide background information or editorial copy for many subjects. We also maintain a calendar of events for the entire state.

Individual Attention

If you need the latest vacation guide and road map of Montana, a liaison with other government agencies or detailed information to fit a specific story angle, we're here to assist you.

Contact Donnie Sexton, Publicity/Photography
dsexton@mt.gov / 406-841-2897

2005 Montana Festival of the Book

The sixth Montana Festival of the Book, in Missoula September 22-24, will feature more than 80 writers and panelists in a variety of panel discussions, readings, exhibits, workshops, receptions, demonstrations, signings and entertainment.

Award-winning authors appearing at the Festival include Rick Bass, James Crumley, Montana Poet Laureate Sandra Alcosser, William Kittredge, Mary Clearman Blew, Pete Fromm, Annick Smith, Russell Chatham, Gary Ferguson, Doug Peacock, Patricia Goedicke, Robert Wrigley, Jon Jackson, Diane Smith, C.J. Box, Neil McMahon,

Kevin Canty, Kim Barnes, Stanley G. West, and many more. Special events include Friday evening's author reception and silent auction, the premiere of a new documentary on Montana writer Dorothy Johnson and the debut of *Eat Our Words: Montana Writers' Cookbook*. Most events are free and open to the public. All will occur in downtown Missoula. For a complete list of events, log onto www.bookfest-mt.org.

